



# THE CO-OPERATIVE FEDERATION of VICTORIA

(A member of the Co-operative Federation of Australia)

# REPORT

For year ended June 30th, 1979

THE CO-OPERATIVE FEDERATION OF VICTORIA  
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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the late 1960's a group of Co-operative leaders formed the Co-operative Development Society with the object of its development into a State Co-operative Federation of Victoria. In 1970 the Co-operative Federation of Victoria was formed as an unincorporated body taking its place with its sister State Co-operative Federations as a constituent member of the national body, the Co-operative Federation of Australia.

Co-operatives incorporated under the Co-operation Act and the Companies Act supported the Federation to enable State dues to be paid as our contribution to the national organisation. The limited resources of our Federation restricted its administration and operations to honorary staff with resultant limitation on services that could be provided.

At the beginning of the year under review, discussions had been entered into with the Council of the Co-operative Federation of Australia on the matter of relocation of the federal Secretariat out of Canberra and functioning as a joint operation in Melbourne. These plans came to fruition. With effect from the beginning of November 1978 we have operated with the services of Mr. W. W. Rawlinson, Executive Officer of the Co-operative Federation of Australia seconded to our State Federation on a 50% time basis. With experienced and professional staff, with a Council who have given much time and effort to active involvement in affairs Co-operative we are able to report on the past year as one of positive development setting the ground work for an effective service for Victorian Co-operatives.

### 2. COUNCIL

In accordance with our Constitution Councillors are appointed on an "approved industry" basis.

During the year Mr. R. W. Naismith resigned as representative of the Co-operative Dairy Marketing Industry on his retirement as General Manager ACMAL after 49 years service with that Co-operative and its constituent member. He was succeeded by Mr. J. F. Rourke who resigned at the end of the year.

Mr. Mason resigned as representative of the Co-operative Housing Industry after a lifetime of service to Co-operatives. He has been succeeded by Mr. N. Harvey.

Mr. Bainbridge resigned as representative of the Co-operative Consumer Credit Industry on his retirement from the Board of the Victorian Co-operative Credit Association. He has been succeeded by Mr. Alan Dash.

At the close of the year the Council and office bearers comprised —

| Office             | Name  | Co-operative Industry   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| President          | Mr. M. Rundle   | Office Management   |
| Vice President     | Mr. O. J. Slattery  | Fertilizer Manufacture  |
| Councillors        | Mr. J. N. Black<br>Mr. K. D. Currey<br>Mr. A. Dash<br>Mr. N. Harvey<br>Mr. E. J. Long<br>Mr. B. Macintosh<br>Mr. I. A. Wood | Herd Improvement<br>Insurance<br>Consumer Credit<br>Housing<br>Co-operative Advisory Council of Victoria<br>Consumer Trading<br>Dairy Manufacturing |
| Honorary Treasurer | Mr. J. F. Rigby   |   |
| Auditors           | Gartner Walker & Associates   |   |

### 3. PLANNING

Early in 1979 the Council spent a weekend in a detailed workshop, planning policies and programmes for the immediate and short term future.

#### 4. COMMUNICATION

All major Co-operatives including Dairy and Fruit Co-operatives incorporated under the Companies Act, Trading and Consumer Co-operatives incorporated under the Co-operation Act and trading Co-operatives incorporated under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act have been visited. A monthly information bulletin has been circulated and regional meetings in Gippsland and Western Districts have been held to develop closer relationships between Victorian Co-operatives and the Federation.

A deputation from the Federation has had meetings with both the present and the previous Minister administering the Co-operation Act.

#### 5. LEGISLATION

The Council's legislation committee has been active in study of the Co-operation Act 1958 and has established good working relationships with the Minister and Registrar on the subject of amendments to the Act.

During the year the Act was amended without prior consultation with the Federation for which the Minister made a public apology and which situation is unlikely to be repeated.

The amendments covered

- (i) Operations of the Credit Societies Reserve Fund Advisory Committee
- (ii) Special investigations of Co-operatives
- (iii) Increase the aggregate of the Government's liability under guarantees executed under the Act.

At the close of the year the Federation, whilst committed to a general review of the Act, sought urgent amendments for the more effective operation of the Federation. These concerned

- (i) Statutory provision for Co-operative representation on the Victorian Co-operative Advisory Council
- (ii) Statutory provision for a Federation able to take into membership Victorian Co-operatives incorporated under legislation other than the Co-operation Act in addition to those incorporated under that Act.

#### 6. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATORS

During the year the Federation's Vice President and representative on the Co-operative Federation of Australia's Finance Committee attended a meeting of that federal committee from which the national body prepared a submission to the Australian Financial System Enquiry. This submission supported the detailed submission made by the Australian Federation of Credit Union Leagues and set out its views on the need for a co-operatively structured financial institution in Australia.

Your State Federation agreed to form a Co-operative Financial Administrators Division with the object of establishing closer working relationships between financial administrators and studying programmes for possible development for better utilisation of total Co-operative financial resources and also the improvement of the quality of financial management within the Co-operative sector in Victoria.

It is planned to hold regular monthly meetings. The first two of these meetings were organised by the end of the year under review and concerned

Co-operative Taxation  
Profit and Cash Flow Budgets.

A good working relationship has been established with the Consumer Co-operative Credit section of the movements through the Victorian Co-operative Credit Association.

#### 7. CO-OPERATION AND PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Co-operation in the agricultural industries is well developed in this State in the areas of processing, marketing and farm supplies. One neglected area and one of increasing importance in these days of continuing inflationary trends is that of co-operation in farm production. Whilst some producers recognise the potential of co-operative effort through herd improvement programmes, some machinery syndicates and farm syndicates the Co-operative Federation sees the need for more active promotion of the concept. The Federation has noted the action taken by Departments of Agriculture in some other States where specialist Co-operative extension officers are employed for assistance to rural producers.

The Federation has endorsed the policy of the Co-operative Federation of Australia relating to the establishment of a Farmer Co-operative Service in the Department of Primary Industry as practised in such countries as the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom.



## **8. CO-OPERATIVE FISHING INDUSTRY**

Two meetings of representatives of Victorian Fishermens Co-operatives were organised by the Federation at one of which the President of the Australian Fishing Industry Council addressed those present.

## **9. OTHER SERVICES**

The Federation staff have assisted one member trading Co-operative by preparing detailed operating budgets for the 1979/1980 year.

## **10. CO-OPERATIVES AND THE UNEMPLOYED**

Considerable publicity has been given in the past year to the possible role of Co-operatives in developing self help programmes to relieve the unemployment situation. Your Federation has recorded its concern at some public pronouncements by ill informed leaders on the true concept and operation of Co-operatives as sound viable economic enterprises performing a social function.

The Federation has been invited to membership of the Small Business and Co-operatives sub-committee of the Victorian Employment Committee. Mr. Rawlinson has been nominated to this sub-committee.

## **11. CO-OPERATIVES AND GOVERNMENT**

Mr. Long has continued throughout the year as a member of the Victorian Co-operative Advisory Council. The Federation values the contribution which Mr. Long's detailed experience of matters Co-operative can contribute on behalf of Victorian Co-operatives. However currently there is no provision in the Act for specific Co-operative representation on that Advisory Council. As indicated at paragraph 5 above action is in hand to remedy this situation.

## **12. THE CO-OPERATIVE FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA**

Our Federation's representatives on the federal Council are Messrs. Long and Macintosh, who have attended meetings during the year.

This national body has continued its international affiliations with the International Co-operative Alliance — which holds consultative status with the United Nations Organisation — and with the International Raiffeisen Union. The Federal President, Mr. Irwin Hunter, has attended international Council and Committee meetings of these bodies.

## **13. FUTURE PLANS**

The Federation's programme for the current year includes development of Director training sessions, aids in member relations programmes, studies in co-ordinated investment programmes.

## **14. CONCLUSION**

A main objective of this State Federation is to promote a better use of resources within the Co-operative sector to benefit Co-operatives and their members. The assistance of the Co-operative Federation of Australia, the contribution of a hard working group of Councillors and the support of a diverse group of Co-operatives have set the ground work for an effective service. Its ultimate success will depend on increased and continuing support and involvement.

